

CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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WHOLE NO. 809

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WHOLE NO. 809

THE AMIABLE TYRANNY OF PEISISTRATUS: OR THE FUTURE OF CLASSICAL STUDIES¹

In that very interesting collection of brief essays in the modern manner known as the *Today and Tomorrow Library*, it is a common custom to select a Latin or Greek name for the title, and then in deference to modern weaknesses of imagination and lack of information on classical mythology or history, to elucidate that name by a sub-title. Permit me to illustrate. Dr. Schiller of Corpus Christi, Oxford, has given us a *Cassandra*; or the *Future of the British Empire*. May I explain that in calling the booklet *Cassandra* the author meant briefly to indicate that he was going to attempt prophecy, that his predictions would be gloomy, and that no one was going to believe them? My method of approach is the same. I have baptized my paper with the name of an amiable tyrant of Athens in the sixth century before Christ, the name of that *Peisistratus* who did so much to grace and embellish the city over which he presided, as well as to carry forward the sound policies of Solon with regard to industry and immigration. He transmitted to his sons a governmental and dynastic inheritance which seemed secure; as a matter of fact it was presently pushed out of the way by the rising tide of the Cleisthenean democracy, and Athenians boasted in a kind of unthinking way, not peculiar to their time or race, about the abolition of tyranny. Yet there always remained among the people of Athens a few who were unconvinced either of the glories of the new regime or of the essential impropriety of the old; they embraced democracy, but only very chastely and without enthusiasm.

¹ Revised version of a paper originally delivered as a public lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, July 1931, and subsequently printed by the University of Alberta Press.

Without forcing the analogy too closely I want only to suggest that classical studies were once like *Peisistratus* in a position of amiable tyranny over society, and that during the existence of this amiable tyranny they very considerably embellished the life of the modern world. But just as the absolutism of *Peisistratus* lost in the next generation the charms and graces and manners of the *gran signore* when *Hippias* discovered through the assassination of his brother *Hipparchus* that his government had active critics, so classical studies, alarmed by the insurrection of science, became in the middle of the nineteenth century anything but amiable in speech and action, feeling with all the concern of a conservative old gentleman studying a garbled account of the Five Year Plan of Soviet Russia, that the very foundations of society were being undermined. But in the end their cutting speech and repressive policies availed them nothing; as *Hippias* was swept away by the rising tide of democracy in ancient Athens, so the classical studies have in our day been displaced, first, by scientific pursuits of a genuine character, and second, by some other pursuits not so scientific which have climbed on the band-wagon of science; both groups alike have profited by the patronage of political democracy. Yet, as was the case in ancient Athens, so, I suspect, among ourselves there remain always a number of perverse, unconvinced souls who think that there is something to be said for classical studies and who would even join in a plot for their restoration. It is they alone who give any ground for the idea suggested in the sub-title of this essay: 'the Future of Classical Studies.' If classical studies were to be committed to the tender mercies of many of our scientists or to the usual head-counting forms of democratic decision, there would of course be no need, no justification for this lecture at all; the future of classical studies would, like that of most statesmen, lie in their past.

It may excite some surprise that the suggestion should virtually have been made in my last paragraph that the followers and supporters of classical studies are a rather small minority today. Is it not the case, for instance, that Dean West of Princeton University continues to demonstrate conclusively that Latin is by long odds the language most followed in the United States high schools, at least equalling, if my memory serves me, the scores of all the others combined? But I am told by one who has occasion to know from long teaching and administrative experience, that a very large part of this Latin figure for schools is made up from persons who take only two years of Latin at most, a preparatory year and a year of Caesar on top of that. Subsequently they more or less gently heave it into the ashbin so indispensable in our modern educational schemes if the place is to be kept clean at all. For my thesis these people, estimable and useful citizens of the United States and other civilized countries as they may be, simply do not count. They are really without relation to the future of classical studies in any large or genuine sense, except perhaps in so far as they provide jobs for teachers of Latin. If their English style grows more lucid, if their spelling is improved, if they penetrate more profoundly into the significance of English words, if their characters are strengthened, if their souls are bettered, as seems to be the earnest contention of twenty-five years of writers in the *Classical Journal*, for instance, that is, no doubt, something to be thankful for, but it does not relate itself essentially to the future of Latin studies. If they rest on no firmer basis than that, they are about ready for the professional house-wrecker. The real question is, what is the future of classical studies in the sense of scholastic pursuits that lead a person on through the third and fourth years of high school Latin, through the two junior college years, through to the bachelor's degree with some Latin still being read, and beyond that in some cases to the higher academic recognitions? A glance around our universities would not suggest that the future of classical studies was being illumined with the purple air in which Dean West seems to see it. Here and there some exceptionally gifted classical teacher, mostly by sheer attractiveness of general temperament, enlists in his classes larger numbers than the average for his subject, but even if every classical instructor possessed the erudition and charm of the Admirable Crichton and the horse-power drive of a Ford tri-motor plane, the struggle would still be an unequal one as between the classics and most other subjects.

Now of course it was not always so; there was a time, not a century since, when our Peisistratus sat firmly entrenched, and to all appearances through his heirs and assigns forever, in what I have already called his amiable tyranny. Classical studies, with a few almost negligible addenda thrown in, formed the bulk of the curricula of the universities in continental Europe, Britain, and America; anyone who cares to examine the registers of Yale and Harvard can satisfy himself on that point. A reprint recently appearing in the press of San Francisco and Oakland of the original list of studies in the infant University of California shows that sixty years ago in a western state Latin and Greek must have occupied most of a student's time and perhaps all of his academic energy. Winston Churchill in his recent book 'My Early Years', reminds us that wishing to enter on a university course around the beginning of the twentieth century, he found that he could not secure admission to either Oxford or Cambridge without Greek and Latin; hence he gave up the idea and took to setting English public life by the ears instead,—a pleasant charge to have laid at the classical door! Yale abolished compulsory Latin just the other day.

What was the situation which made possible such a complete domination so long maintained? Several factors entered in, (1) the kind of people who offered themselves to be educated, (2) the supposed objects of the education to which they submitted themselves, (3) the traditional view of what constituted a genteel education. We shall say something about each of these briefly.

We must remember first that in both Britain and America the sons of the aristocracy (whether titled or not makes no difference in the argument) and of what may be styled in the quaint phraseology of other days, the 'upper middle classes', constituted the great majority of the students offering themselves to the important schools of learning. These young men were looking forward with certainty in England, and with an assurance next to certainty in America, to assuming presently dominant positions in church, state, and bar.² Now service in church, state, and the courts once required the ability to use language with precision and power and, if possible, with refinement; the objects therefore of the education to which these young men, somewhat condescendingly in many cases, submitted themselves, were the production of a good Eng-

² See Evan T. Sage in "Who should study Latin?" (*Classical Journal*, 20 [1924] 143-151) for excellent material on the changing conditions in the clientele of American schools and colleges during the last century.

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lish prose style and the acquisition of a certain body of philosophic and historic facts or pseudo-facts with which to produce substance under the skin of eloquence. Granted that such was the type offering itself to receive a college education and that such were the objects, it seems reasonably clear that a very considerable school preparation would be required along similar lines; hence the higher schools both in England and America plunged heavily on classical studies. In England the better sort of so-called 'public' school does so still; it is probably fair to say that a good public school sixth form boy is quite the equal of a junior or even a senior student of our colleges in Latin or Greek, whatever else he may know.³ Consequently you had a long period of schooling, ten or a dozen years, occupied largely with classical studies, followed by three or four college years in the higher reaches of the same, and beyond all question in such a length of time with an ever-growing force of cumulative effort a wide range of classical reading was achieved such as would be quite unusual even among professional classicists today.

I do not wish to imply that only the sons of the aristocracy or of the upper middle classes entered the universities of England and America, but if any others entered (and of course they did, often to their own great social misery), they conformed to the programme and the standard which had been set up for their betters, and indeed through the successful achievement of that programme qualified themselves to become, as lord bishops and lord justices, the founders of aristocratic or upper middle class families themselves. There is surely this to be said for the Peisistratan tyranny of those days, that if in one sense it was highly exclusive, in another sense it presented an open career for talent; if a youth could gain a sound mastery over his classics, he had a fair chance to become a bishop and exercise episcopal functions in the intervals permitted by the editing of Greek tragedies, or to become a judge and emphasize his rise in society by hanging members of the lower strata from which, by the grace of God and a good ear for Latin quantities, he had emerged.

Something has now been said of the students in what I have dubbed the 'Peisistratan' education, and of the purposes which were had in mind

for them by their guardians and instructors; it must also be remembered that what the followers of the classical studies then pursued was regarded as being the only thinkable kind of education; and really for the purposes it had in mind and for the times in which it was operating, it was soundly conceived and devised. Other things were from time to time heard of, no doubt, and sometimes given some official recognition, mathematics, for example, and natural philosophy, but never such a thing as English or a modern foreign language or modern history; anything of that kind was not to be allowed to interfere with the great work, but must be got *ambulando*.⁴ As for the pursuit of science it was dubiously regarded; it smacked from the first of basely utilitarian possibilities, of possible relation to trade and mechanical occupations. In the minds of the classical dons of that time scientific knowledge was regarded as something to be acquired, if acquired at all, by a species of apprenticeship to a competent craftsman; they sincerely felt the soundness of that point of view expressed in an enactment of ancient Thebes in the fourth century before Christ to the effect that no one should be permitted to hold a public office who had followed a mechanical occupation within the preceding ten years. Thus the Peisistratan tyranny in education got a socially narrow selection in its undergraduate body to be trained for very limited ends and in a system of studies deemed the only conceivable thing for the students in what modern bromidism calls their 'vocational design.'

Of course it was an amiable tyranny too from certain angles, just like that of Peisistratus which has bequeathed us some of the happiest and serenest faces of all Attic sculpture, faces full of the joy of living in a society sure of itself and of its future. It produced figures which in the church, in the state, in the law courts, and in letters graced history whether in Old England or the New. The English style of these figures does not by any means in all cases appeal to us today; yet even when we are disposed to smile at it, we are bound to admit just as regularly its distinction, its force, its fine feeling for true meanings in speech, its essential dignity, its

³ I mean by this statement the equal in actual knowledge of the languages themselves as languages. I do not think the same would be true so far as an understanding of what it was all about is concerned. I have had English students who were quite surprising in Latin Prose and equally surprising in a total deficiency of ideas as to the significance of Rome in the development of Europe.

⁴ Mr. C. E. M. Joad in his brilliant *Unorthodox Dialogues* (Benn: 1930) believes that herein lies one of the soundest, if least designed, points in a classical training (57): 'This indeed is the greatest though the least recognized advantage of a classical education, that by concentrating your attention in youth upon literature of minor importance, it gives you no chance of ruining your taste for the masterpieces of great literature by attacking them before you are ready for them.'

reverence for the spoken and the written word. If the influence of classical studies produced some arid tracts in English literature, it gave us Milton at one end and Tennyson at the other, if those who follow English professionally will permit the coupling of these names. Peisistratus found the Hundred-Foot House of Athena on the Acropolis a quite ordinary Ionic amphitetrastyle temple; he glorified it with his Dorian colonnade, thereby setting unconsciously a model for the future grandeur of the Parthenon. To him Athens owed much in the way of art and finish; that is why we must regard his tyranny as amiable. Even so it would be utterly unreasonable to deny that the classic Peisistratans lent largely to the greatness of England and New England as well in the days when they were comfortably established in the seats of power.

Still, even as when Peisistratus with a good deal of comfortable assurance bequeathed his kingdom to his sons, the forces that were to upset that government were seething under the surface already, so by the middle of the nineteenth century two movements inimical to the old classical dynasty were well under way. These movements were modern experimental science and the urge towards universal democracy of the egalitarian variety.

A new ideal was proposed in education, a new set of contacts with the world developed, and a new set of students aroused with a new set of purposes. In Canning's gorgeous phrase 'a new world was called into being to redress the balance of the old.' The new ideal was to know the world of nature which constitutes the envelope, so to speak, of man's life, and, more intimately, the constitution of man himself as a physical being and his relation to natural phenomena about him. The new set of contacts sent men to things instead of to words; it changed the content of thought not quite overnight but still with amazing rapidity. The new group of students, developed by the present day to a vast army, comprised those to whom the substance of the classical studies had made little or no appeal, but who were filled with curiosity as to natural phenomena. The new purposes proved presently to be very practical; even though pure science has tended somewhat towards the pharisaism of a certain classical type, it has none the less proved inevitable that science should associate itself in a thousand practical ways with common life. It is thus as a matter of fact brought to the attention and even to the partial understanding of large numbers of people who could never be expected to appreciate a literary nuance or follow appraisingly a turn of syntax. This is vastly

important to an understanding of our subject; science has in the very nature of things been able to make a contact with the lives of the many, while classical studies, historically and of necessity as well, have touched comparatively few. As long as these few were the all-important few, the fact that they were few mattered not at all, but when these few lost priority in world affairs, it was a shoe of another size altogether.

The Reform Bill of 1832 in England was a first wave in the great rising tide which has carried us on to the point where votes for children (of good I.Q. of course, to begin with) is the last slogan left. On both sides of the Atlantic a mighty river of universal suffrage has rolled into the troubled sea of human life, and it has brought down with it, as rivers will, a good deal more than just water. One of the things it has carried along on its wide bosom is universal compulsory education. Thus vast hordes of persons are brought within the net of a primary education by the touching belief of democracy in the possibility of an educated proletariat, and the raising of the school age subjects an ever-increasing number to secondary education. This in turn increases that residuum which, by methods of selection not always obvious, arrives ultimately at our universities. Now, frankly, classical studies, as we should properly think of them, never were fitted for mass-production, and never can be; they afford, at least for most students, no material contacts with the world, and so require a high degree of imagination, they make a peculiar demand for a keen language sense and for an appreciation of form in and for itself, they imply industry and application over a very considerable period of time if any sound results are to be shown, and they are undoubtedly pretty hard. As for the hardness, despite the amazing collection of pretty plans for eliminating the curves and reducing the grades on the Camino Real of classical studies which you will find strewn plentifully through the years of the Classical Journal, I cannot refrain from passing on a Latin inscription quoted in a highly suggestive article by Professor E. S. McCartney of the University of Michigan:⁵

To Dalmatius, his very dear son, a boy of remarkable talent and learning, whose unhappy father was not permitted to enjoy his companionship for even seven full years, for, after studying Greek without an instructor, he took up Latin in addition, and in three days' time he was snatched from the world. Dalmatius, his father, set up this stone.

⁵ Classical Journal, 23 (1927) 163-182; 'Was Latin difficult for a Roman?' I am able to furnish the exact reference for the inscription; it will be found in CIL vi 33929.

While I have never myself known any instance in which Latin worked quite so fast or so fatally as that on the system, I have personally been acquainted with cases where the would-be initiate was left faint and gasping after a few rounds with the imperial Latin tongue, and was quite willing to retire to the field of minor intellectual championship bouts.

It is useless to pretend that these qualities singly and even less so the more desirable combinations of them, are a very usual endowment, and one suspects in his saner moments that even in the heyday of classical studies when they were being applied to a small and highly selected group, they missed fire quite as often as they reached the mark; what else can be the meaning of those elaborate 'ponies' prepared and published by a certain Mr. Clark in the neighborhood of 1735, to save the genteel youth of Britain from the further dog's-eating of dictionaries of Latin and Greek? It was not then classical studies that could provide a college pabulum for democracy's newly fledged students, they perhaps least of all, to tell the truth; it was not pure science either, by the way, which really has created its own aristocracy to correspond with that aristocracy of rank and birth with which classical studies once dealt. The flood was met by the development of many new departments with which this present thesis does not have to deal either to praise or to blame, no, not even to enumerate; the point which is vital to my proposition is this, that with the advent of all that science and egalitarian democracy brought in their train, classical studies lost their exclusive grasp on the material of education and on the recipients of education, nor were they able,—and it was no disgrace to them but just a misfortune,—to offer a course generally attractive to the hosts of new claimants for an education, claimants so often devoid of any background of adequate and leisurely training, good taste, or cultural tradition. A group in which these are largely lacking cannot yield many individual cases for classical studies, and to be frank in saying this is something that must be adventured, even at the risk of being considered a snob. If classicists do not usually thank God that they are not as other men, I am sure it is only because they have learned how impolitic it is to do so without possessing the social and economic standing of a Pharisee, and few professional classicists do.

But the case for classical studies which was in view of developments then taking place bad enough, was not helped by the new slant which these studies were suddenly made to assume.

America and Britain, the former much more than the latter, fell under the blight of an idea made principally in Germany to the effect that classical studies could most profitably be conducted along scientific lines, and thus at the very moment when those in charge of such studies should most courageously and firmly have stuck by their peculiar province of idealism, enduring whatever scorn that entailed, they too tried to be practical in the new manner, and began to indulge in those pastimes of counting and indexing, so essential in the physical sciences which must build their inductions on the basis of thousands upon thousands of carefully checked and ordered facts, but not anywhere near first considerations in the field of letters and art.⁶ I do not speak as making light of the work of our statistically minded grammarians; the error lay, and lies, not in classical professors devoting themselves to the minutiae of classical scholarship, so much as in submitting to all its rigors an untold number of students who never could understand what it was all about, and were at the same time deprived of a fighting chance of appreciating something of the life-values in Latin and Greek literature. Many classical instructors seem to be unable to realize that there is one glory of the sun and another of the moon, in short, that there is one type of exactitude for an undergraduate following classical studies and quite another for a near doctor in the same field.

It now remains to see what is happening at present and then to speculate briefly on the future of classical studies. Greek, of course, is *agonisant*; you seem to hear the death-rattle in its throat.⁷ And when I say Greek, it is Greek that I mean, not courses about Greek art and Greek daily life and Greek thought, but courses in the Greek language *quâ* language. I do not speak as one who comes into court with clean hands; for every reader of Greek as a language whom I have in my department I have at least five who are studying about the Greeks without possessing the slightest ability to check in the original the truth of any statement offered to them in these connections. And this is a very serious and distressing fact which I take to be pretty generally true, at least on this continent

⁶ For a severe criticism of this method in the teaching of English in the universities see Joad, 55-57. It will perhaps cheer classicists a little to see someone else belabored.

⁷ In Francis W. Kelsey's *Latin and Greek in American Education* (University of Michigan Publications: Macmillan: 1911), 7-16, will be found statistics confirming this statement, and nothing has happened since 1911 to improve things.

of America, because even if we agree with Wordsworth that Liberty has two voices, one of the mountains and one of the sea, it still remains for us to add that the language chosen by Liberty in which to speak is Greek. It is really a very grave thing that the whole esoteric knowledge of the Greek language, the whole ability to interpret its pronouncements in literature from first-hand knowledge, is rapidly passing into the hands of a few scholars, only a little more numerous, let us say, than those who work in Sanskrit. It is a most pathetic thing that if one of the classical languages had to be chosen for the sacrifice, it should have been Greek; Greek it is which contains the message to which the modern world might conceivably respond with some enthusiasm, while Latin, to be quite frank, is the official language, both in prose and verse (I except Catullus and Virgil's Eclogues), of a hard-faced, hard-fisted imperialistic aristocracy in whose nostrils the word of sweetest savor was certainly not *libertas* but *imperium*. I have no direct remedy to suggest, but I believe that there will always be just a few of the Peisistratans left, always a few to resist in their hearts and so in their choice of courses, the blandishments of a democracy that calls itself practical, and yet runs off into a thousand and one elections of college subjects which have infinitely less relation to real life than has classic Greek.⁸

The case is not quite the same with Latin. There are still a few institutions which require it for matriculation, and because further many colleges have some language requirement in the lower division, Latin is often elected by freshmen and even by sophomores on the theory that they had better face perils of which they know something than rush into others of which they are uncertain. There are also certain special circumstances favorable to Latin studies in the colleges and universities. Some professors of English have a pronounced conviction, and most all of them a strong suspicion, that there is a good deal of English literature which cannot very well be understood in any deep or permanent way without a classical background; Greek being usually unattainable, Latin is frequently insisted upon. Then too Romance departments,

French, Italian, Spanish, frequently insist on some Latin, though the dose prescribed varies greatly and is sometimes only homoeopathic. That they do not ask for more has been in part the fault of classicists who have harped away on the beauties and the virtues of classical Latin style; but of course the Romance languages were not derived from classical Latin. I remember hearing Dr. Glover of Cambridge University define French as representing the unsuccessful attempts of a barbarian Gaul to talk Latin with an Italian centurion. It might be added that English itself is really in very large part a Romance language; it certainly stands, so far as its vocabulary is concerned, far closer to French and Italian than to German. Thus for a true understanding of English and for a sound use of one side of its varied and powerful word-equipment, Latin is an excellent preparation and indeed a continuous corequisite. Even in college regions where Latin is not popular, there is an uneasy and annoyed feeling that this is so.

The philosophy once associated directly with classical studies has now passed largely into the hands of professional philosophy departments, even in the case of the ancient thinkers; I would not care to guarantee that its exponents could always be depended on for reliable opinions on the precise meaning of the original, but perhaps the results of Mr. Loeb's generosity in providing some good and some not so good English renderings vis-à-vis with the text have made that dig merely malicious. The history of Greece and Rome has frequently become entirely separated from the classical departments, but successful work in that field still involves some real knowledge of Greek and Latin. There remains to be mentioned the delightful field of classical art and archaeology.

It has been said of a well-known archaeologist that he appeals to students by saying that they would be well advised to follow classical archaeology which has Latin on the one hand and Greek on the other, and the story goes on to add that his students frequently show that they have turned aside neither to Latin on the right hand nor to Greek upon the left, but pursued the great via media of the study of the Realien of the ancient culture. With all respect for the splendid equipment that first-rate work in classical art and archaeology requires, I have often felt that the performance of many students in that field resembles most the act of constructing a beautiful strawberry shortcake by having the maid hull the berries, bake the cake, and whip the cream, while reserving for one's self the de-

⁸ See on this point in Kelsey's collection just referred to, Professor Shorey's essay on The Case for the Classics, 342, and note the phrase: 'utilitarian objections that apply with equal force to the inferior substitutes which partisan advisers recommend in its place.' The villainies of 'partisan advisers' are more in multitude than the sands of the sea, and no subjects have suffered more from the unfair methods of these persons than Latin and Greek.

lightful task of combining the succulent elements in a chef d'oeuvre. I do not wish to be thought of as underrating in any way the immense importance of classical archaeology which has done so much and is doing so much to illuminate for us the atmosphere of the ancient Mediterranean world, but I cannot bring myself to think of that particular branch of classical studies as occupying the position of mistress in the house rather than that of a competent and useful housemaid who knows how to dust carefully all the pretty things and put them back on the shelves without breaking them. In short, classical archaeology cannot in my judgment occupy a central or dominant position in the field of classical studies properly so called; the moment that such a conviction arrives, the archaeologist really belongs in the field of art rather than in that of the classics. Classical archaeology's highest purpose is to illustrate the life and thought of the Greek and Latin peoples, of which the principal revelation is contained in the extant portions of their literatures; it is an inversion of values to treat Greek and Latin literature as so much explanatory material for objects which have survived to us by chance from classical times. The archaeology of the Etruscans, who have left us no literature, is interesting but not vital. It would seem therefore that in the future development of classical studies it must be demanded of those who would profess classical archaeology under the auspices of the classical departments, that they should be just as competent general classical scholars as those who profess letters, or history, or the mechanics of the languages.

But I have been speaking, of course, of those of whom we might say in technical terms that they are majoring in classical archaeology; provision must also be made for that very large number of students who can under any proper auspices be attracted to courses dealing with the 'external equipment' of ancient classical life. Courses such as these should always be taught by good classical scholars who have in addition a flair for art; it is extremely unfortunate when they fall into the hands of professional art teachers simply as items in the history of art. Under the latter circumstances, things and people being what they are, instruction in the classical Realien is almost sure to be feeble, ineffective, inadequate, and sometimes most inaccurate.

This illustration, derived from my view of the two kinds of teaching of classical art and archaeology which may naturally be found side by side in any university, really serves as the gate-

way towards the explanation of my idea of the future teaching of the classical literatures; the amiable tyranny of the Peisistratans is going to return and reassert itself among the jaded democracies of the western world, but its form will be somewhat different from that obtaining in the heyday of the classical regime. Just as in the matter of classical art and archaeology I have suggested that it is entirely fitting to have courses for those specifically professing classical archaeology, in which the ancient languages would be an indispensable requirement, and also courses of a generally informative character with regard to the ancient classical culture, in which the original tongues would not be necessary, so I foresee in the matter of the Greek and Latin literatures a maintenance of rigorous courses in the languages for those who desire to make a specialty of them, but also the setting up on an extensive scale of other courses for the general student who is not equipped with Latin and Greek. The remainder of this essay will be concerned chiefly with this second type of literary course.

It seems to me that the number of students actually studying Greek and Latin in the original is likely to continue to decline relatively if not absolutely, since our universities and colleges are much more likely to weaken on language requirements than to become more severe. I should think that despite every blandishment and every threat, the number of freshmen and sophomores taking Latin, for example, will greatly fall off; in fact, in courses taken in the original we shall presently have left only those persons intending to make a specialty of Latin and Greek, along with a few elect spirits who through some unusual piece of luck have received so sound a grounding in these languages that they will choose to do a considerable part of their college work in them. Courses of this kind will be altogether delightful both to the instructor and the instructed because they will be conducted without the wretched compromise that must rule when one is trying in the same class to curb spirited steeds and spur on mules in order to achieve the fatal democratic average. They will be comprehensive and they will be thorough. For a time too they will tend to become smaller, which will be nothing against them educationally, but there is a chance that they may presently increase again for a reason I shall develop in a moment.

Such courses, to be sure, in no way touch the great mass of students; they are allowed, and sometimes, I am afraid, even urged, to rush past these literatures of Greece and Rome which

are fundamental for an understanding of the literary, the philosophic, and the political history of the western world. But some day now not very far off it is going to penetrate the armor-plate of the classicist mind that it is quite unnecessary to get thus out of touch with the generality of students, and from the standpoint of education generally, most inexpedient. Most inexpedient because some of the most vital thought-material in the world lies in classic literature, most unnecessary because many of the great authors of Greece and Rome are now available in good translations, in some cases in very distinguished translations, such as Jowett's Plato and Thucydides, Sir Gilbert Murray's noble versions of quite a number of the Greek plays, or G. G. Ramsay's *Annals of Tacitus*. I advance the theory then that the average student, and indeed many students who are much above the average but not classicists, could take an enormously profitable course in, let us say, three Greek dramas as translated by Murray, and might very likely know more of the external technique and the inner spirit of Greek tragedy through following such a course than could possibly be derived from the halting perusal of a single play in an imperfectly understood original by an indifferently prepared student, who is in the course for no other reason perhaps than that, having had some preparatory Greek, he feels that the university should recognize his fine gesture towards great literature.

Surely it will not be argued that such courses would be inadequate because based upon translations into English of the classical writers. It is true that all translations are not equal; there are some quite sad ones even in a series like the Loeb which one would have thought could elicit better things more uniformly. But, as I have pointed out, there are some very great and distinguished translations available, and some others which are sound, though less inspired, translations which have caught the spirit of the original and are at the same time living English. No departments of our universities are larger than the departments of English; they give instruction in English and American authors who wrote in English which is the native language of ninety-five per cent. of the students, but I do not find that on that account these courses are regarded as any less scholarly, less accurate, less exigent than any others. Indeed one of the most obvious phenomena of university life in England and America today is the fine precision of scholarship to be found in the study of the English language and literature itself, and this is reflected in the character of the instruction given

and the results demanded. If classicists could not do as much with Sir Gilbert Murray's moving version of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* as teachers of English with *King Lear*, there is something wrong with the classicists. I can testify from personal experience to the powerful grip taken by precisely that translation of Sophocles' master drama on undergraduates who up till that time had supposed that Shakespeare stood unrivalled in the field of drama. In fact I can foresee the possibility of some considerable alarm developing everywhere in departments of English as they were forced to realize that the literatures of Greece and Rome had a power to attract and to hold students not only quite comparable with that possessed by any of the English classical writers, but actually in some cases superior to it.⁹ However, I do not feel that the suggested alarm would do anything but lead to the most generous of rivalries between classical and English departments for the ear of a student body, waiting for the world's great messages, and sometimes in vain, because we will not give them in a way to be 'understood of the people.'

The giving of such courses would naturally have to lie in the hands of men and women competent in the original languages, and, let us hope, competent as well in the history and general content of at least English literature, in order that they might familiarize their classes not only with the stuff of the Greek and Roman literatures but with its effect upon the thought and style of writers using the English language, and if possible, upon French, Italian, and German literature as well. Persons competent to teach such courses would then have to be shaped and trained for their work by a long and exact study of the classical authors in the original tongues, but they would presumably bear in mind the sort of instruction for which they were preparing, and engage rather in literary studies than in those relating to philology or text-criticism. An aim great and worthy in itself, novel in character, and practical as well would be exhibited before students. Practical as well, I say, because an answer might very well thus be provided for the student who so justly says at present: 'I like Latin and I should like to teach it, but where am I going to find anyone to whom to teach it?' A whole new field of col-

⁹ For a strong denial of this statement and indeed of any value whatever in the classical literatures (apart from form, which must be apprehended in the originals only), see C. E. M. Joad, pp. 99-105. This book should be read by all college teachers, even if it only provokes them.

lege instruction would be opened up by the recovery for large bodies of students of a tract which at present resembles nothing more than some buried city waiting for the excavator's spade.

And not only that, but there would be—*experto crede*—a continuous recruiting in the ranks of these students of translations for our classical courses in the original tongues, especially among that better class of students who least enjoy the conviction of ignorance in themselves upon matters which they come to feel are fundamental. I referred some time back to a source of increase for our classes normally composed of those who come to college already prepared to go on with Greek and Latin and sometimes inspired to do so; I had in mind those persons who would learn through translation courses, and probably in no other way, the value, perhaps even the necessity, of studying these languages in the original. Let it be granted that the water-tight compartment systems of our college curricula, the strenuous contests between students anxious to amass tangible credits and recorders equally anxious to withhold them, and the general confusion of form with substance in our education, may make it appear improbable that anyone will take the necessary time and trouble to alter his course once embarked on for the sake of getting some Latin and Greek, or a little more than he had originally planned for; yet the truth of these things transcends fiction. And a student who comes by this route overcoming whatever difficulties college registers and 'partisan advisers' put in his way, is an asset of the first order; 'one volunteer is worth ten pressed men.'

The amiable tyranny of Peisistratus was not such a bad thing for Athens while it lasted, and even after it was swept away by the Cleisthenean democracy, it retained, as I have already suggested, many admirers and well-wishers, some of whom secretly, others quite openly, schemed for its return. Of course it never did return in the form in which they had hoped it would; as a matter of fact it came back in a much better way. It was no descendant of Peisistratus who took the helm of state in the high days of democratic Athens, but another great aristocrat, Pericles, animated by a like desire with Peisistratus to glorify the life of Athens and to make her in art, beauty, and the reign of reason the school of Hellas. Those who had looked for a Peisistratid restoration were obliged to forego the implementing of their desires, but if they were sensible, they must have come to realize how much better their hopes had been gratified

in another way. I think I have known not a few Peisistratans among the classicists contemporary with myself who actually believed that the amiable tyranny of the older classicism could be restored by its well-wishers when the democracy became disheartened over its manifest educational failures. Surely they must now know that they were wrong; the democracy has blundered into all kinds of educational fatuities, and has been willing to try all and sundry nostrums and panaceas for its ills, but the cure of a return to the older classical ideal is, as I hope I have sufficiently explained, impossible for our democracies in view of the very nature of their composition. It is not that way that hope lies. We must consent (and why not?) to see our Peisistratus democratized into a Pericles, in short, to prepare ourselves for re-establishing the old, amiable tyranny in a way consonant with the formulas and demands of a thoroughly popularized education.

WILLIAM HARDY ALEXANDER

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REVIEWS

A. E. Housman, a Sketch, together with a List of his Writings and Indexes to his Classical Papers. By A. S. F. Gow; pp. xiii, 137, 3 plates. New York: The Macmillan Co.; Cambridge: at the University Press, 1936.

The biography, which comes first in this book, occupies 55 pages. Next is a list of seven portraits of Housman, the latest of which, a drawing by Francis Dodd executed ten years ago, is reproduced as a frontispiece. Then follows a list of Housman's writings, which fills about 15 pages, the last two of which deal with English rather than classical publications. The rest of the volume is taken up with a long index of the passages in Greek and Latin authors concerned, and a short final one of miscellaneous subjects. The former of these will prove an immense convenience for those wishing to know Housman's textual opinions on any given author. That this is made available so soon after the death of their author is due to the fact that Mr. Gow began to collect the material ten years ago and has kept it up to date ever since. As Housman in his will provided strictly against the posthumous publication of any collection of his writings we are fortunate to have these lists and indexes, but may not look for any further apparatus with which to study the work of this eminent textual critic. Two pages inserted in the body of the book give samples of Housman's handwriting.

Housman is happy in his biographer, also a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, for a quarter of a century, who knew his friend probably as intimately as any human being ever could have known him. The 'Sketch' is done with a tenderly affectionate hand yet with remarkable fairness.

His folly has not fellow
Beneath the blue of day
That gives to man or woman
His heart and soul away.

Such was the philosophy of the 'Shropshire Lad', and Housman remained true to it. Gow does not fail to do justice to the violent contrasts in one whom he so greatly admired and with whom he was so intimate. We see pride of opinion over against impatience with the 'conceit' of others; cold-blooded bitterness in controversy mixed up with deep emotion over genuine poetry; a poet himself of most delicate touch urging in a public address that a scholar has no 'concern with the literature with which he deals'; arrogance and silence mellowing under certain conditions into vivacity in conversation and social amenities; eagerness for an immortal fame quenched in the pessimism that could write:

To stand up straight and tread the turning mill,
To lie flat and know nothing and be still,
Are the two trades of man; and which is worse
I know not, but I know that both are ill.

The key to Housman's unusual career is to be found in the fact that one endowed at the same time with fine poetic appreciation and a passionate love of truth and accuracy became a successor of Richard Bentley as the Latinist of Bentley's Trinity College, and was eager to emulate his ideals by showing how the Latin poets should have written. Brilliancy in conjecture and a thorough knowledge of the Latin tongue led him to venture a host of corrections many of which, like Bentley's, will hardly stand the test of time. Bentley's numerous proposals for correcting the text of Horace have today comparatively little weight. Housman was equally concerned to rebuild the text of Propertius, for example; and in Gow's index of passages a dozen pages are taken up with references to proposals for emendation or transposition, or discussions of MSS and other textual matters concerning that author. Housman as early as 1888 in a long article in the *Journal of Philology* proposed some 250 alterations in the text of Propertius. How little these have affected our accepted text of today can be easily seen by examining any of the latest standard editions of that author. Housman felt that the text of a Latin author must be corrupt when one 'can make neither

head nor tail of it'. Those who disagreed with him he charged with 'simple ignorance', 'insufficient knowledge of Latin', and the like. But is it not quite possible that two milleniums hence some critic may be equally puzzled with the meaning of much of the 'poetry' current today, and it might chance would even hesitate over the correct interpretation of some of Mr. Housman's lines, without being therefore warranted in assuming that the tradition was corrupt. The present reviewer can never forget a remark of the late Tracy Peck during the discussion of a construction in Lucretius. 'Probably', he said, 'if you had asked Lucretius himself to explain the syntax in question, he would not have been able to do so at once; he gave it no thought'. It is a safe rule not to resort to textual alterations until every effort to explain the traditional text is exhausted. Even Housman evidently learned to appreciate this more in his later work, and hesitated to be too sure of his rightness. For with commendable honesty he declares in his final edition of Manilius (the ripe fruit of many years of hard and brilliant work on that difficult author) that there are 'more than twenty' differences between this latest text and that which he had put forth in installments during the preceding twenty-seven years, and that these differences 'proceed from a change of opinion'. Those who browse among Mr. Gow's admirable tabulations will do well to cultivate an equally tolerant attitude of mind.

KARL P. HARRINGTON

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A Greek Lexicon, compiled by H. G. Liddell and R. Scott. A new edition revised and augmented throughout by Sir H. S. Jones, with the assistance of R. McKenzie, and with the cooperation of many scholars. Part 9: *σίσυλλος* — *τραγάω*, pp. 1601-1808. New York: Oxford University Press, 1936.

With the appearance of the ninth Part of the much improved Liddell and Scott Lexicon, we may feel that we are in sight of its completion. One more Part, it seems,—perhaps a somewhat larger fascicle than those which have already appeared—will finish the great task. We shall then have a lexicon which is much more inclusive than the older one, without being very much more bulky. (The new work covers so far 1808 pages, exclusive of Preface and Aids to the Reader, while the eighth edition reaches the same point in 1773 only slightly smaller pages.) The greater inclusiveness has been made possible partly by the exclusion from consideration of Patristic and Byzantine literature, but chiefly

by abbreviations and more compendious methods of arrangement. This compression, while perhaps making the use of the work less convenient to a very slight degree, has made it possible to treat the vocabulary of inscriptions and papyri in addition to that of all the ancient Greek authors of importance.

Scholars and students who are concerned with Greek can only look forward with satisfaction and gratitude to the prospect of having available, within a year or so, the whole new Lexicon from Alpha to Omega.

CLINTON W. KEYES

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Lucretius and His Influence. By George Depue Hadzsits; pp. viii, 372. Longmans Green, 1935. (Our Debt to Greece and Rome, vol. 12) \$2.25

To the series *Our Debt to Greece and Rome* Professor Hadzsits has contributed a volume which fulfills admirably the apparent purpose of this series in that it combines adequate summary of scholarly achievement with stimulating exposition for the general reader.

The book has a wider range than such well known studies of Lucretius as those by Masson, Martha, Sellar, Regenbogen, or Alfieri; the list of subjects treated includes: Life of Lucretius, Epicurus and Epicureanism in Athens, Lucretius and the Roman Epicureans, the *De Rerum Natura* and Rome of the First Century B.C., Lucretius and the Atom, Lucretius and the Soul, Lucretius and Religion, Lucretius and Ethics, Lucretius and the Roman Empire, Lucretius and the Middle Ages: The Church and the Grammarians, Lucretius and the Renaissance, The Seventeenth Century, The Eighteenth Century, Lucretius and the Present.

It should be said, of course, that no serious student of ancient Epicureanism would agree perfectly with any other scholar in this field upon the degree of emphasis which should be placed in a succinct study upon the various aspects of the subject. Thus, some readers may wish for more particulars than Professor Hadzsits gives about Lucretius' relation to Roman Epicureanism (such facts e.g. as those given by Guido della Valle in his *Tito Lucrezio Caro e l'Epicureismo* Campano, Naples, 1933; pp. 314—a work not cited by Professor Hadzsits); other readers may look for further detail about the influence of Lucretius in the Renaissance, particularly in France (such detail e.g. as is given by Dr. Eleanor Belowski in *Lukrez in der französischen Literatur der Renaissance*, Berlin, 1934; pp. 132—a work not cited by Professor Hadzsits); the general reader of our day may reasonably expect

a rather more precise answer from the scholar as to which translations are best (the translation of part of Lucretius by Charles Foxley, Cambridge, 1933, might perhaps have been added to the partial list on p. 371).

However, I for one am not in the mood after reading this book to dwell upon such matters as these. I am impressed far more by Professor Hadzsits' clear statement of the fact that Lucretius and Roman Epicureanism differ in important ways from Epicurus and Greek Epicureanism. The assumption that almost any Epicurean document may be used as guide to the ideas of Lucretius is downright unscholarly; it is strange that such an assumption has been made by so many scholars and it is refreshing to find this assumption discredited here. Equally satisfying is the eloquent plea for the unique and insufficiently recognized importance of a distinctively *Lucretian* doctrine in ethics and religion. Professor Hadzsits has in the past advanced and ably defended his ideas upon this important phase of ancient Epicureanism; his thesis is here argued again with the subtlety which reminds one of Giussani. One other conspicuous virtue of the book is the skill with which the author resolutely maintains a precarious balance between claiming too much and admitting too little in the vexed question of Lucretius vs. Modern Science; this particular feat has never to my knowledge been so well done.

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